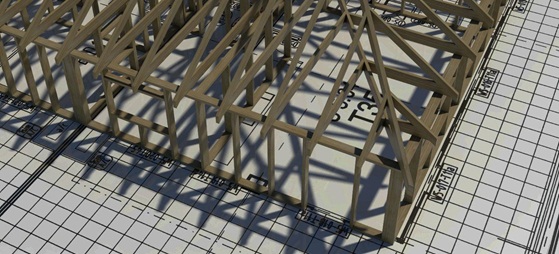
Creation vs. Evolution: Why a Model Is Essential

August 25, 2008 By Dr. Hugh Ross <http://www.reasons.org/articles/creation-vs.-evolution-why-a-model-is-essential>

The public debate about teaching intelligent design has exposed widespread confusion both inside and outside the church about how the scientific enterprise operates.

One of the most frequent complaints scientists make about the Intelligent Design movement is that their brand of intelligent design is not testable, falsifiable, or predictive. This brand lacks these features, scientists explain, because there is no model explaining the nature of the intelligent design. The problem with these complaints is that the general public has little comprehension of what really makes up a scientific model or why it is so important for a model to be testable, falsifiable, and predictive.

One illustration of the public’s confusion is a question I got after one of our outreach events. A man heard me use the term model in my response to another question. He wanted to know who was the model and whether or not I had a picture of her!

In the interest of clarifying the intelligent design debate, let me offer a bare bones description of what makes up a scientific model:

In science, the term “model” refers to the schematic description of a system (or set of phenomena) that accounts for its observed and inferred features as well as its origin and complete history. A model is much more than a mere idea, inference, method, hypothesis, or rudimentary theory. It’s a scenario that offers reasonable explanations for the entire scope or history (origin to ending) of a particular system in nature, as well as for its relationship to other phenomena.

Using a model approach supplies researchers with enough detail to assist in further study. It offers explanations for how, when, where, why, and in what order a phenomenon takes place. It anticipates or predicts discoveries that could either verify or falsify the model’s explanations. The best models also yield specific suggestions for how near-future research may help improve understanding of the systems or phenomena they attempt to explain.

Since no scientist knows everything about any particular system, no scientific model can offer a perfect explanation. Scientific understanding advances, however, as different scientific models compete with one another. The model that offers the best explanation for a particular set of phenomena and that is most successful in predicting future scientific discoveries is judged to be closest to offering a truthful description. The scientific community retains such a model for further development and refinement. Models that fail to provide a satisfactory explanation and especially fail to predict future scientific discoveries are rejected.

Scientists will retain a failed model, however, if there is no superior model to take its place. This is why it’s typically fruitless for Christians to point out all the flaws and failures in the evolutionists’ explanation for the origin and history of life. Most evolutionists are already aware of the shortcomings in their model. Nevertheless, they will not abandon the model until they first see a superior model to take its place. It’s for this reason that the Reasons To Believe scholar team refrains from “evolution bashing” and instead focuses its efforts on developing a positive case for biblical creation through a detailed, comprehensive, and predictive scientific model. My new book, [Creation as Science](http://www.reasons.org/catalog/creation-science-testable-model-approach-end-creationevolution-wars), summarizes our testable creation model and includes an appendix (F) where I make 90 predictions of what scientists will discover in their future research and contrast our predictions with those arising from three other creation/evolution models.

Subjects: Astronomy and the Bible, Creation Passages, Human Origins and the Bible, Intelligent Design Movement, Philosophy of Science, TCM - Biochemical Design, TCM - Cosmic Design, TCM - Faint Sun Paradox, TCM - Human Origins, TCM - Life Design, TCM - Life's Origin, TCM - Speciation, Theistic Evolution

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Reasons to Believe emerged from my passion to research, develop, and proclaim the most powerful new reasons to believe in Christ as Creator, Lord, and Savior and to use those new reasons to reach people for Christ. [Read more about Dr. Hugh Ross.](http://www.reasons.org/about/who-we-are/hugh-ross)